

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ZAMBIANS FEAR SIERRA LEONE WAVERING ON ANGOLA, URGE

US PROVIDE MARGIN OF MILITARY BALANCE TO REASSURE
WAVERERS

1. SUMMARY. ZAMBIANS FEAR SIERRA LEONE STANCE ON ANGOLA MAY BE WEAKENING UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM GUINEA AND NIGERIA. BANDA BELIEVES ONLY IF US CAN COME FORWARD WITH MORE ASSISTANCE TO MAINTAIN MILITARY BALANCE IN ANGOLA WILL AFRICANS BE CONVINCED US PREPARED STAND UP TO SOVIETS IN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN BANDA TOLD US JANUARY 24 THAT SIERRA LEONE HICOM SHIRLEY GBUJAMA, RESIDENT IN ADDIS ABABA, WILL BE IN LUSAKA THIS WEEKEND FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH ZAMBIANS ON COHESIVENESS OF 23 AFRICAN STATES OPPOSED TO MPLA RECOGNITION. BANDA SAID HE HOPED SIERRA LEONE WOULD HOLD THE LINE BUT HE NOT SURE AS ITS GOVERNMENT WAVERING EVEN BEFORE OAU SUMMIT. SAID PRESIDENT STEVENS HAD RECEIVED TEN ("YES, TEN," HE REPEATED) DELEGATIONS FROM GUINEA PRIOR TO SUMMIT. SINCE THEN STEVENS UNDER CONTINUING PRESSURE FROM GUINEA AND NIGERIA TO GIVE IN AND RECOGNIZE MPLA.

3. BANDA SAID HE THOUGHT SIERRA LEONE'S ATTITUDE WOULD DEPEND

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LARGELY ON US STAND ON ANGOLA. IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO

COUNTRIES LIKE SIERRA LEONE THAT US CAN BE RELIED UPON TO HLEP
NON-COMMUNISTS IN ANGOLA, THEN THESE AFRICAN COUNTRIES WILL BE
BETTER ABLE TO STAND UP TO SOVIETS. BUT SOME OF THEM ARE VERY
TIMID, BANDA SAID, AND THEY ARE TRYING NOT TO OFFEND SOVIETS
BECAUSE THEY FEAR US WILL NOT COME THROUGH IN CRUNCH.

4. EXPANDIG ON THIS THEME, BANDA SAID IT OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE
THAT US STAND UP TO SOVIETS IN ANGOLA NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF
IMPORTANCE THIS ISSUE TO DETENTE BETWEEN GREAT POWERS BUT ALO
TO AFRICANS WHO SEE THIS AS REAL TEST OF US FOREIGN POLICY IN
AFRICA. IF US WERE NOW TO COME FORWARD WITH MORE ASSISTANCE
TO MAINTAIN MILITARY BALANCE IN ANGOLA, THIS WOULD BE ONE OF
THE BEST WAYS TO IMPRESS THOSE AMONG PRO-MPLA AFRICANS WHO ARE
MERELY "HEDGING THEIR BETS" AND TRYING KEEP ACE IN HOLE BY NOT
OFFENDING SOVIETS TO WHOM THEY BELIEVE THEY MAY EVENTUALLY HAVE
TO APPEAL FOR ASSITANCE IF US SEEN THAT IT CANNOT BE COUNTED
UPON TO MEET ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS OF AFRICANS IN FUTURE.

5. I REPLIED THAT US RECORD OF ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA WAS GOOD
AND IMPROVING AND THAT ABOVE ARGUMENT WAS NOT A REASONABLE ONE.
BANDA REPLIED THAT PROOF WOULD BE WHAT US DOES IN ANGOLA.

6. COMMENT: WE NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE ZAMBIANS WILL DO THEIR BEST
TO REASSURE AND BOLSTER SIERRA LEONE POSITION.
WILKOWSKI

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